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Year 11 EA

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Making connections across texts

Connection: Violence ruins lives

Many lives across society have been ruined by violence. I have chosen to explore the theme of violence ruins lives. This theme is evident in the film Mean Creek directed by Jacob Aaron Estes, the novels Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck, Once Were Warriors by Alan Duff, and also in the short story The Last Spin by Evan Hunter.

In the film Mean Creek, the life of Marty is destroyed by violence. This is shown when Marty, in an act of violence causes <sup>his</sup> George to fall off the boat and eventually drown. This shows that Marty, through violence has potentially ruined his <sup>own</sup> life. This is shown when Marty suggests they bury the body. The quote, "you know what they do to people like us in prison? They rape us," helps emphasise the fact that Marty feels that his life will be ruined if he <sup>very good</sup> ~~comes~~ up. Jacob Aaron Estes wants us to understand that it is vital we take responsibility for our actions and own up to our mistakes so our life isn't further ruined. At the end of the film, Marty fails to accept responsibility for his actions, this is shown when he disbands from the group and robs a store, further <sup>good</sup> ruining his life.

Similarly, in the novel Of Mice and Men, like Marty, the life of Candy is also destroyed by violence. This is shown when Lennie, in an attempt to silence Curley's wife, accidentally breaks her neck, killing her instantly. The quote, "I could have hoed in the garden and washed dishes for them guys," shows that the dream Candy had of living an independent life is shattered by an act of violence when Lennie kills Curley's wife. John Steinbeck wants us to understand that it is vital for everyone to take control of their own life and make their own choices.

don't depend on others.

Also, in the novel Once Were Warriors, like Marty and Candy, the life of Grace is also destroyed by violence. This is shown when she, against her will, is attacked and raped in bed by her uncle Bully. The quote "Grace has been hung," helps emphasise the fact that through being violently raped, Grace was trapped in a deep depression that she felt she could not escape from. Alan Duff wants us to understand that it is not alright to be living in violence and suicide is not the only way out. ✓

Finally, in the short story The Last Spin, like Marty, Candy and Grace, the life of Danny is also destroyed by violence. This is shown when he is chosen to represent his gang in a game of Russian Roulette against Tigas gang. The quote, "I don't dig too many guys on my club, either," helps emphasise the fact that Danny doesn't really want to be involved in a gang, so his life is in danger being in one. Evan Hunter wants to show us that being involved in a gang is dangerous and potentially life threatening. At the end of the story, Danny loses the game of Russian Roulette, ultimately destroying his life through violence.

I believe that violence ruins lives in the society we live in. The texts Mean Creek by Jacob Aaron Estes, Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck, Once Were Warriors by Alan Duff, and The Last Spin by Evan Hunter, have all shown me that violence doesn't belong in our first world society and we should do all we can to distance ourselves from violence. These texts have also taught the readers and viewers that there are different ways to settle differences between people.

Words: 605

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Connections across text.

I have chosen to explore the theme Violence ruins lives. This theme is explored in the short story, The Last Spin by Evan Hunter, the novel Mice and Men by John Steinbeck, and the films Mean Creek by Jacob Aaron Estes and Once Were Warriors directed by Lee Tamahori.

In the short story Last Spin the life of Danny is ruined by violence eventually relating in death. Danny was a small time gang member who was a loving and caring husband, but when away from home he mixed with the wrong crowd. Danny's life was ruined when a couple of men from his gang attacked a store on rival territory. Two random members were chosen from each gang to settle the conflict with a game of Russian roulette. "So like... like this is the way we agreed to settle it. I mean one of us and... one of you fair and square, without any street bopping, and without any law trouble." This shows that when sorting your problems out with violence instead of doing the correct and humane way, going through the law. Your past will eventually catch up with you.

In the novel Mice and Men the author John Steinbeck illustrates and defines the meaning of the theme violence ruins lives. In the novel, this theme was expressed several times, but one particular part caught my attention. The scene when Curley had a thought in his mind that he was able to intimidate Lennie. Using violence to get the better over Lennie, Curley will soon discover that he let his ego get the better of him. Curley verbally abuses Lennie and when he responds, Curley feels intimidated. In retaliation he punches Lennie continuously. Physically hitting the life out of him, Lennie freaks. Grabbing Curley's hand and squeezing it till all the bones in it break. Due to Curley's ignorance he is now left with one usable hand and a life of shame and fear. Curley's Wife does not appreciate her husband with only one hand and definitely finds Curley a lot less attractive.

The film Mean Creek by Jacob Aaron Estes also portrays the theme violence ruins lives. The director strongly and effectively points this out in the scene where George falls out of the boat and drowns. George was a mentally disabled boy who took advantage of people smaller than him. One day at school he found Sam playing with his camera. George retaliates and tackles Sam, repeatedly punching

Sam until he gets off. Due to this incident Rocky, Sam's older brother decides on a plan with his friends to teach George a lesson. Sam, Rocky, and his friends pursue with the plan but when George discovers this, all hell breaks loose. As they are rowing on the river, "your dad splatted his brains all over the wall, your dad splatted his brains all over the wall." This quote is yelled by George towards Marty expressing his feelings and as the matter grows George gets pushed into the water. Scared for his life and not knowing how to swim he accidentally knocks himself unconscious resulting in his death.

Whose life is  
ruined by  
violence?

Once Were Warriors was my choice in a film that I thought, has an immense connection towards the other three texts/films. Jake Heke was the main character in this film, portrayed to be a violent, alcoholic man. Throughout the movie he continuously abuses people driving away family and friends, and gaining his reputation on the streets. One scene he witnesses his daughter's death and in retaliation grows anger and frustration. Without hesitation he seeks information on his daughter's death, and when discovering that his best friend was the reason for it, he snaps. "f@#\*en Bully" is what he Sais while physically bashing him. Due to this, and already witnessed and felt the pain and anger from Jake, his wife and family leave him. All due to violence he loses a daughter, friends, and his family and has also opened a life of violence up for his two sons that have begun to follow their father's footsteps.

In conclusion violence is not the correct solution for your problems. Doing so will only lead you into a life of depression and loneliness, or no life at all. To conclude this the short story, The Last Spin, the novel, Mice an Men, and also the films Mean Creek and Once Were Warriors pointed out the many reasons not to do so and expressed although we go through rough patches in our lives. There are plenty more ways to seek help or refuge. ✓

Harawira Kahukura

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